

Mary Pfeiffer  
Shasta County Agricultural Commissioner

In northern California one of the major pest problems we grapple with is the continuing invasions of noxious and invasive weeds. Much of northern CA is dominated by resource lands, inc. timber, range, and agricultural lands and much of that is managed by the federal government. In Shasta County over 1/3 of the county is managed by either the USFS or the BLM. We also adjacent to the intermountain states, an area with critical noxious weed problems. California is readily accessible to these areas by numerous highways that traverse this area. Given our proximity and accessibility to infested areas, constant transportation of items such as hay and erosion control materials and the fact that some of the federal agencies do very little in the way of weed control or eradication, this area of the state is under constant threat from these weeds. We are seeking help in obtaining additional resources to combat these problems and looking for ways to at least slow the invasion of these pests into our state. Many private and public landowners and managers continuously fight these problems but it is not enough to stop the threat to our resource lands.

Another problem that I hope can be addressed is the lack of resources and/or effort to complete NEPA documents for USFS ground in California. The USFS does not allocate sufficient resources to complete the necessary environmental studies and documents so that a complete Integrated Vegetation Management Program can be implemented when noxious and invasive weeds are found. Without these documents the use of herbicides has virtually stop on USFS managed lands. Agricultural commissioners from northern CA and in the Sierra foothill counties have been advocating for the development of categorical exclusions from NEPA for small infestations for noxious weeds on USFS managed lands. If a reasonable exclusion could be developed, incipient infestations could be eradicated before they exploded, causing significant environmental and economic damage not only on the public lands but on adjacent private ranch, farm, and timerlands as well. The USFS is simply not living up to its obligation to address these problems.

The inclusion of these issues in the farm bill has the potential to provide vital resources to a growing problem that crosses many jurisdictional lines. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or need additional information. Thank you for your assistance with this issue.

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